SPEECH ACT IN TERMS OF SPEECH ACT THEORY

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Statement of the problem. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the linguistic thought centered around the problem of studying semantic aspects of the syntactical structures. Different scientific schools appeared at that time.

One of the most prominent scientists in pragmatics of the middle of the 20th century is John Austin. Much of his epoch–making book, "How to Do Things with Words" (at first, a series of lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955) was first published in 1962. J. Austin's conception is directed against oversimplified view of language. A central tenet of his theory is that no philosophical school can afford to study language in itself, without paying any attention to pragmatic aspects: *"… it was for too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a "statement" can only be to "describe" some state of affairs, or to "state some fact", which it must do either truly or falsely"* [cit. according to 10, p. 1]. To artificially abstract sentences from real everyday conversation and to confine one's interest to them alone is to elude the great complexity of linguistic communication. Austin stresses that in our everyday conversation we are attuned not primarily to the sentences we utter to one another, but to the speech acts that those utterances are used to perform. Such acts are staples of communicative life, but only became a topic of sustained investigation, at least in the English–speaking world, in the middle of the twentieth century.

In the last decade, the problem of speech act and its characteristics has become the focal point of the researchers interested both in speech activity [3; 5; 12–14] and speech act theory [1; 4; 6–11; 15–20].

The urgency of the investigation in the field of Speech Act Theory can be proved by the following words of J. Searle: *"A great deal can be said in the study of language without studying speech acts, but any such purely formal theory is necessarily incomplete. It would be as if baseball were studied only as a formal system of rules and not as a game"* [Cit. according to 19, p. 17].

This scientific paper **aims** at the profound analysis of the term "speech act" and the consideration of its place in the terminological apparatus of speech act theory.

To achieve the aim we are to fulfill the following **tasks**, and namely to:

– present a short analysis of theoretical works on speech act theory;
– single out the basic central terms of speech act theory;
– clarify the term "speech act";
– describe basic speech act classifications and point out to their advantages and disadvantages.

Findings and discussion. The central terms of the speech act theory are: a performative verb, a speech act (locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act), illocutionary force, direct and indirect speech acts.

The main idea of the speech act theory is that we, when pronouncing a sentence in communicative situation, are committing some action or actions: moving our speech organs; mentioning people, places, objects; saying something to our interlocutor; enrapturing or annoying him/her; asking, promising, ordering, apologizing, censuring, etc. These actions are motivated by the intention of the speaker.

The term "performative" (derived from the verb *"to perform"*) was first introduced by an English linguist J. Austin. He singled out sentences which were not used to describe or merely state something, but to perform an action by saying something and named them "performative utterances" or, in short, "performatives". He outlined the grammatical form of performatives as *"verbs in the first person singular present indicative active"* [11, p. 235]. But the phenomenon of this kind itself was described earlier in the works of E. Benvenist [2] and E. Koshmider [5]. E. Koshmider named this phenomenon "coincidence" and describes it as *"the coincidence of word and action <…> in the sense that the uttered word is in itself the indicated action <...> it is obvious, that a speaker, uttering his request <…> is not trying to expose the action of the request in the process of that action. On the contrary, the speaker is concerned only with the performing of the act of request, and performing it only with uttering the word, so that the moment of uttering is a moment of performing a request itself, the moment of performing an action, indicated by the verb"* [5, p. 163].

The notion of *a speech act* as a linguistic term had existed even before J. Austin started to deliver his lectures on speech act theory. K. Buhler in his "Theory of Language" [3] borrows the term from German philosopher Edmund Husserl. As E. Husserl before him, K. Buhler also views the speech act as a sum of speech situation, context and interpretation. In "Theory of Language" it is a far less developed notion than the other elements of K. Buhler's "Structure of Language". His speech act is connected with the language structure via the meaning, devised by the speaker on the basis of social context and the abstract meaning, which is an object of linguistic description [3, 83–88]. However, speech act in this sense holds no interest to us, because it does not function in terms of speech act theory, presented by J. Austin.

Although the bases of the speech act theory were laid in the early 30's of the XXth century, it is not an easy task to give the correct definition of the term "speech act", mainly due to the complexity of its structure. For the term "speech act" includes locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act, which are complex concepts.

The first element of the speech act conception is the locutionary act. J. Austin subdivides the locutionary act into three constituent parts; phonetic act, phatic act and rhetic act. The phonetic act is an act of uttering noises, the phatic act is an act of uttering certain vocables and rhetic act is an act of using these vocables with a certain meaning and reference [10, p. 95]. Thus, locutionary act is a term, which J. Austin distinguishes as an act of producing certain vocables or words with a certain meaning and reference. The illocutionary act, on the other hand, is a more complex concept. J. Austin notes that to perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and eo ipso to perform an illocutionary act [10, p. 98]. However, he also adds that to determine a kind of the illocutionary act we must also take into account the way in which we use locution in this

certain sentence [10, p. 98–99]. This kind of distinction seems hazy and unclear at best, the weak point here being the distinction between meaning and illocutionary force of the utterance. J. Searle, the follower and pupil of J. Austin, argues that locutionary and illocutionary act in Austin's meaning are simply two labels for one and the same phenomenon: *"Uttering the sentence with a certain meaning is, Austin tells us, performing a certain locutionary act; uttering a sentence with a certain force is performing a certain illocutionary act; but where a certain force is part of the meaning, where the meaning uniquely determines a particular force, there are not two different acts but two different labels for the same act"* [Cit. according to 17, p. 407]. The scholar insists that although the concepts of locutionary and illocutionary act are different concepts, the class of illocutionary acts will contain many members of the class of locutionary acts. He continues with the idea that the meaning of the utterance determines its illocutionary force with necessity. He goes further and proposes to abolish the notions of locutionary act and rhetic act. J. Austin's classification included locutionary act (phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts) and illocutionary act, whereas J. Searle's proposed classification is as follows: phonetic act, phatic act, propositional act and illocutionary act, all of which are mutually dependent. J. Searle characterizes a propositional act as the content (or proposition, as it is called in philosophy) of a certain utterance [17, p. 420]. In this way, by separating the meaning (content) of the utterance from its illocutionary force, J. Searle hopes to escape the ambiguity of the original J. Austin's classification.

The illocutionary force of an utterance can be roughly described as its purpose, the goal we wish to achieve by using that particular verb or phrase. Illocutionary forces became the basic tenet for J. Austin's classification of speech acts, which he describes in the second half of his course of lectures on speech act theory [10, 150].

Perlocutionary act, according to J. Austin is a speech act which is the achieving of certain effects by saying something [10, p. 120]. The effects obtained may include persuading, convincing, intimidating etc. In other words, those effects are consequences of a certain speech act. J. Austin's distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary act seems to us strained at best. Illocutionary act, the scholar states, is an act performed by saying something by means of an explicit (direct) performative. Perlocutionary act, on the other hand, is an act performed by saying something (or as a result of saying something). Perlocutionary act is a non–conventional non–linguistic act and as with all consequences it is not in the power of the speaker. That is why J. Austin distinguishes between perlocutionary object (intended result) and sequel (unintended result). The main principle of illocutionary and perlocutionary act destinction proposed by the scholar is the impossibility of the latter to be expressed in the form of a direct performative verb. Such verbs as to persuade, to prevent are perlocutionary, not illocutionary. Thus, we may suggest that J. Austin knew there are not only explicit forms of performative verbs, but also the hidden, indirectly expressed intentions, indirect speech acts. However, he failed to explain their nature and find a place for them in his theory of speech acts which can be explained by sheer difficulty of the task or simply by fear on his part that this new inclusion would upset the delicate structure of the new theory's terminological apparatus.

However, not all speech acts are obvious in their illocutionary force. In fact, direct

speech acts constitute the lesser part of all speech acts used in written and oral everyday speech. They are indirect speech acts that are used most frequently, and to determine their illocutionary force we must carefully consider the linguistic and extralinguistic contexts. The very existence of indirect speech acts was not realized by J. Austin (he only hints at the possibility in his lectures, as we have stated here before) and even J. Searle at first did not acknowledge their existence. The phenomenon can be explained by the absence of reliable methods for indirect speech acts' illocutionary force detection. Only some time later, J. Searle was forced to include indirect speech acts in the terminological apparatus of the speech act theory. He published the article "Indirect Speech Acts" [18] in 1975 for the first time. The scholar defines them as cases in which one act is performed indirectly by way of performing another [18, p. 30]. He continues with the thought that in indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer [18, p. 31]. In other words, the difference between direct and indirect speech acts is that direct speech acts have an explicit performative in their structure, whereas indirect speech act do not have it. The illocutionary force of the latter can only be inferred, guess at by the hearer (audience). Only with the inclusion of concepts such as shared background knowledge (context), rational reason (common sense) and inference we can hope to determine the appeal of the indirect speech act.

There are many speech act classifications based on different principles [1; 7; 8; 10]. Some of them are based on grammatical and semantic differences of the speech acts [1; 8], the others – on the illocutionary force and purpose of the utterance [7; 10]. Further on we will discuss some of them in comparison, but now it seems more suitable to stop on the detailed description of one of such classifications. Since J. Austin is the founder of that theory, let us begin with his classification. He distinguished the following kinds of speech acts: expositives, verdictives, commissives, exercitives and behabitives.

Expositives. Here the core of usage often has a direct form of assertion, but also at the head of its core a performative is placed, which indicates, how this assertion matches the context of the discourse (exposition itself) [10, p. 85]. This class can be argued to include instances of verdictives, exercitives, behabitives and commissives as J. Austin himself pointed out [10, p. 160]. Such ambiguity is inevitable, given the large sphere of use of this class of speech acts in our everyday speech. The use of such verbs is also possible: *to predict, to allow (in the meaning 'to reason"), to testify.*

Verdictives. A verdictive is concluded or based on facts, official or non–official message or reasoning, or judgemental evaluation of facts, if they are eminent. It is essentially (as the name suggests) a verdict. It may or may not be final (as in estimates, reckoning etc) [10, p. 150–152]. The use of such verbs is also possible: *to convict, to interpret as, to rule, to estimate, to date, to rank (to evaluate), to find (as a matter of fact), to understand etc.*

Commissives are designated by promises or other obligations or commitments. They are also used for declarations or to state one's intentions [10, p. 150]. The peculiar case of taking sides, for which commissives are also used, is less clear. Examples of such

use of comissives are: *to espouse, to oppose, to champion, to side with, to declare for etc* [10, p. 157].

Exercitives are characterized by the exercising of one's rights, influence or power. This class is somewhat similar to verdictives (as both types of speech acts are used by judges), but exercitives are an act of will and power of the speaker, of his decision that a thing *is to be* so–and–so, instead of simply stating that the thing *is* so–and–so [10, p. 150–154]. The use of such verbs is also possible: *to degrade, to demote, to name, to dismiss, to order, to command, to levy, to choose, to bequeath, to warn, to proclaim (in the sense "to issue"), to countermand, to enact, to dedicate, to vote for, to fine, to claim (in the sense "to state one's ownership"), to pardon etc.*

Behabitives include the notion of reacting on other people's behavior, their faith and settings, and expressing one's own settings towards other people's behavior in past or predicted future. In short, they are a varied class of performatives which have to do with the social side of human life [10, p. 151–159]. The use of such verbs is also possible: *to apologize, to regret, to thank, to congratulate, to sympathize, to praise, to ignore, to criticize, etc*.

In terms of this work we had also studied the classifications by J. Searle, Yu. Apresyan and I. Shatunovsky. They are somewhat different from the original scheme proposed by J. Austin, but they are still compatible with it, which can be easily shown in the following table.

Table 1

Speech Acts Classifications Comparison

J. Austin	J. Searle	Yu. Apresyan and I. Shatunovsky
Expositives Verdictives	Representatives (Assertives)	Specific messages and assertions Consents and objections
Commissives	Commissives	Promises
Exercitives Verdictives	Directives	Requests Propositions and advice Warnings and predictions Demands and orders Permissions and prohibitions
Verdictives Exercitives	Declarations	Declarations Approvals Convictions Forgiveness Specialized acts of alienation Acts of nomination and promotion
Behabitives	Expressives	Speech rituals Approvals Forgiveness Declarations Specialized acts of alienation

As it can be seen from this table, all three speech act classifications are, in fact, classifications of illocutionary acts, because they are based solely or partially on the obvious illocutionary force of the utterances. And due to the fact that illocutionary force can only be so clearly defined in direct speech acts, these classifications can only loosely be applied to indirect speech acts, which are less obvious in their purpose and means of expression. Thus, although indirect illocutionary acts can belong to the classes stated in those classifications, the class definitions given by their authors do not incorporate indirect speech acts.

The first two classifications, that by J. Austin and that by J. Searle are similar in their terminology. They both rely heavily on the illocutionary forces of the utterances in their class distinction. J. Austin had not acknowledge the existence of indirect speech acts in his theory, but this addition was made later by J. Searle. In his article on indirect speech acts the scholar gives the indirect speech act's definition and provides guidelines for its identification.

J. Austin's classification is, in fact, a classification of illocutionary verbs, which he supposes to be a mark of illocutionary acts. However, illocutionary verbs do not always constitute different illocutionary acts, what is confirmed by J. Searle's insight [7, p. 177–178]. Furthermore, in Austin's classification the definitions of classes of speech acts are ambiguous and generalized. For example, we can take behabitives, which include the notions of behavior, reaction, faith, setting and their expression (social side of human life in general, it seems). But that kind of definition is considerably lacking in brevity and strictness of terms. The same problem persists with most of other classes found in Austin's classification. Because there is no single clear principle this classification is based on, this ambiguity causes a great deal of confusion and overlapping between the notions inside the system.

J. Searle proposed his own classification [7], using J. Austin's classification as the basis, has considerably improved it. According to Searle, the point of representatives is *"to commit the speaker <...> to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition"* [7, p. 181]. Directives he characterizes as attempts of the speaker to make the hearer to do something. They can have various degree of "modesty", however, i.e. it can be a simple invitation or a insistent urging. Searle's definition of commissives does not differ significantly from that Austin had applied before him. The point of expressives is *"to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content"* [7, p. 183]. To be considered successful, declarations must achieve correspondence between their propositional content and reality. As we can observe, J. Searle's definitions are much clearer which precludes overlapping of notions.

The classification by Yu. Apresyan and I. Shatunovsky is mostly directed towards semantic and grammatical differentiation of utterances, and less towards their illocutionary force. Thus, this particular classification seems to us to be more suitable to the needs of practical selection and description of indirect illocutionary acts. Specific messages, consents and objections roughly coincide with Searle's representatives and their purpose is self–explanatory. Promises are, in fact, commissives. Requests,

propositions and advice, warnings and predictions, demands and orders, permissions and prohibitions are for the most part directives. Declarations, approvals, convictions, forgiveness, specialized acts of alienation and acts of nomination and promotion are all declarations in essence. Searle's expressives can be subdivided according to this classification into speech rituals, approvals, forgiveness, declarations and specialized acts of alienation. In general, Yu. Apresyan's taxonomy only further breaks classes proposed by J. Austin and J. Searle into smaller parts, the names of new elements indicating the communicative purpose of speech acts, belonging to them. The speaker's intention is the main principle of this taxonomy, which would make it more useful in the task of practical linguistic analysis of indirect speech acts in everyday speech.

In conclusion to this part of our article, we would like to present a set of speech act characteristics which were generalized and developed by V. Demiankov in one of his articles on speech act theory [4]:

1) the circumstances of success of the speech act are rooted in that, what in terms of a sentence is usually called its modus (in a sense that it is a certain part of a sentence, its performative part);

2) speech act is an atomic unit of speech, a sequence of language expressions, which is uttered by a speaker and is intelligible for at least one of the many users of a certain language;

3) it can be as well larger than a sentence (utterance) or smaller, i.e. it can be a consistent part of a sentence; in this way, a nominative word combination can be represented (although in classical speech act theory it is forbidden) as a speech act of description, more or less successful;

4) it establishes a connection between non–verbal and verbal behavior;

5) it allows us to interpret the text and its implied meaning;

6) it is connected with the term "frame" in some conceptions of modeling speech activity: there are "ritual" sequences of speech acts, which are interpreted on the basis of a mental picture of the world (which in its turn depends on the frame we had chosen) and rely on past, present and future (predicted) actions of communicants;

7) the process of understanding of an utterance, in which speech act takes place, depends on the process of deductive conclusion in everyday thinking, which brings to light a new aspect of the problem of opposition of grammar rules of language on one side and mental processes – on the other;

8) it is not appropriate to mention the understanding of a sentence only in its literal meaning: we must point out the purpose of speech act. That is why the detection of illocutionary force of the sentence is incorporated in the description of language [4, p. 226–228].

Conclusions. According to our research, speech act is an abstract complex concept. It is a separate act of speech, that in standard speech circumstances represent a bilateral process of acoustic cognition and understanding. Some of the elements in the structure of the speech act are redundant, because they create unnecessary ambiguity of definition inside the system, which must be avoided in order for this taxonomy to hold any practical value. Following J. Searle we abolished the notion of locutionary act and rhetic act (as its

element) altogether. In our subdivision we follow J. Searle's order: phonetic act (sound production), phatic act (production of vocables), prepositional act (content of the utterance), illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. J. Searle suggested that the meaning (content) of the utterance should be distinguished and separated from its illocutionary force.

The second part of the article deals with main speech act classifications, suggested by J. Austin, J. Searle and Russian linguists Yu. Apresyan and I. Shatunovsky. The classification suggested by Russian linguists tries to free itself from depending on the illocutionary force of the speech act and relies instead on semantics and grammar, and to some degree can be applied to identification of indirect speech acts in speech.

The further research of indirect speech acts and ways of their identification is very important. Although many methods of their detection exist in linguistics and philosophy of language, we still lack a reliable practical toolset necessary to further our research in the field of Speech Act Theory.

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Резюме

Стаття присвячена дослідженню термінологічного апарату теорії мовленнєвих актів, зокрема її центрального поняття – мовленнєвого акту. Автор розглядає теоретичні положення теорії мовленнєвих актів, спираючись на роботи засновників даної лінгвістичної теорії та їх послідовників. У першій частині статті подаються визначення складових мовленнєвого акту: локуційного, іллокуційного та перлокуційного актів, а також таких понять як перформатив, іллокуційна сила, прямий та непрямий мовленнєвий акт. Шляхом аналітичного огляду джерел з проблем теорії мовленнєвих актів автор уточнює і доповнює вищеназвані дискусійні поняття теорії мовленнєвих актів. У другій частині статті розглянуто три основні класифікації мовленнєвих актів британського лінгвіста Дж. Остіна, американського лінгвіста Дж. Серля та російських лінгвістів Ю. Апресяна та И. Шатуновського. Зазначено, що хоча вищеназвані класифікації мовленнєвих актів спираються на різні їх ознаки, однак усі вони здебільшого враховують лише їх іллокуційну силу, яка у непрямих мовленнєвих актах далеко не завжди очевидна. Тому недолік цих класифікацій у тому, що вони можуть бути використані лише для класифікації прямих мовленнєвих актів.

На завершення автор наголошує на необхідності подальшого вивчення непрямих мовленнєвих актів та методів їх ідентифікації задля подальшої розробки теорії мовленнєвих актів та розуміння принципів дії мови.